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Río Hondo College RISE Scholars Program Receives Grant to Expand Services for Justice-Impacted Students

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College’s Reaching Institutionalized Students through Education (RISE) Scholars program will receive significant additional funding to provide counseling, peer tutoring, mentoring and other services, thanks to a Rising Scholars Network grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO).

The CCCCCO grant will provide more than \$460,000 – spread over three years – to the RISE Scholars program, an award-winning Río Hondo College academic initiative that seeks to educate and empower formerly incarcerated students or those impacted by the criminal justice system. This is the first year the RISE Scholar program has received the CCCCCO grant.

“The CCCCCO grant is a great step forward for the RISE Scholars program, as it will allow us to increase our services to accommodate an additional 30 students,” Assistant Dean of Student Equity and RISE Scholars Cecilia Rocha said. “We will also be able to provide more community outreach to probation and parole officers, in-custody programs and other community-based organizations.”

Established in 2017 by the Río Hondo College Student Equity Office, the RISE Scholars program partners with Los Angeles County agencies to reduce recidivism and improve educational outcomes for justice-involved students, providing support services – administered through the RHC Scholars’ Hub – to help students navigate their educational and vocational pathways.

RISE provides one-on-one support with admissions processes, financial aid applications, scholarship forms, academic transfer-related documents and resume writing. Additionally, RISE offers meal and book vouchers, calculators and laptop loans. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, RISE hosted expungement workshops to assist qualified students in clearing their records.

“The RISE Scholar funding will allow students to receive more help, especially those who struggle to balance school and work, since the program will be expanding its services to provide more access to staff,” Río Hondo College student Karime Miramontes said. “This will be a tremendous benefit for all RISE scholars.”

MORE

Río Hondo College is an educational and community partner committed to advancing social justice and equity as an antiracist institution that collectively invests in all students’ academic and career pathways that lead to attainment of degree, certificate, transfer, and lifelong-learning goals. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

Río Hondo College was one of 20 colleges to participate in the 2019 Leadership Institute for California Community College Serving Formerly Incarcerated Students program, co-hosted by the CCCCCO, the Stanford Criminal Justice Center and the Renewing Communities project. In 2020, RISE was recognized with the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Mena-Valdez Award for outstanding new program.

“The RISE Scholars program has been an invaluable resource for the Río Hondo College community, and we are thrilled that the CCCCCO will give it the opportunity to expand its services even further,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “We are proud of the work they do creating support for our students and providing them with second chances in succeeding.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

RHC_RISESCHOLARS: Río Hondo College’s RISE Scholar Program, which provides counseling, peer tutoring and other services to help educate and empower formerly incarcerated students, received a grant of more than \$460,000 from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office to expand its program, accommodate more students and provide more outreach services.

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